

Medical marijuana program needs more oversight

By CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE Capital Bureau

SALEM — The state's reporting and tracking of medical marijuana has been "inadequate and inaccurate," increasing the risk of medical marijuana being diverted into the black market, a new state report says.

The Oregon Medical Marijuana Program doesn't have reliable, independent ways to verify grow site addresses, and it doesn't do enough inspections of grow sites, either, according to a report by the Oregon Health Authority.

There are more than 20,000 medical marijuana grow sites in the state. But last year, the medical marijuana program inspected just 58 sites.

Registrants also comply with reporting requirements at low rates — in 2017, monthly compliance rates



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among growers ranged from 26 percent to 42 percent.

The program has also had problems "ensuring

the appropriate and verified destruction" of medical marijuana products that fail lab tests for pesticides and

other chemicals.

Oregon voters legalizing medicinal use in the state in 1998. The Oregon Health

Authority says some of the problems with Oregon's system have existed since the system got up and running in 1999.

But some of the problems were made worse by changes to the market after Oregonians voted to legalize recreational cannabis in 2014.

OHA Director Patrick Allen, who requested the report, said in a statement that the agency is working to improve tracking growers, enforcing rules and "making sure product that fails testing has been destroyed."

"More than 40,000 Oregonians depend on medical marijuana to treat their qualifying medical condi-

tions," Allen said. "We are taking steps to maintain the integrity of Oregon's medical marijuana program and make sure medical products reach the patients who need them."

The agency claims "chronic underfunding and understaffing" limit the medical marijuana program's ability to properly regulate medicinal marijuana.

Anthony Taylor, president of Compassionate Oregon, a patient advocacy group for medical cannabis, declined to comment late Thursday because he had not had a chance to review the report, which was released shortly before 4 p.m.

Corrections

The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

Blockbusters in Alaska set to close; Bend store is last

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — Alaska's last two Blockbuster video stores are calling it quits, leaving just one store open in the U.S.

The stores in Anchorage and Fairbanks will close for rentals after Sunday night and reopen Tuesday for video liquidation sales through the end of August, said Kevin Daymude, general manager of Blockbuster Alaska.

"It's going to be crazy," Daymude said of the temporary reopening. He said residents were sad when they heard the news and many people have been reminiscing about their Blockbuster memories.

In recent years, Blockbuster stores have vanished in most of the U.S.

But their survival lasted longer in Alaska, with some crediting expensive internet as a factor in keeping many people renting videos rather



This May 2, 2018 file photo shows the exterior of a Blockbuster Video store in Anchorage, Alaska.

than streaming.

The closures will leave the Blockbuster in Bend as the sole holdout.

"How exciting," said the Bend store's general manager Sandi Harding. "It might end up being a little chaotic for a couple of weeks."

As for the fate of that store, the future looks good.

"We have no plans on closing anytime soon," Harding said.

Cougar attacks small dog in southeast Portland

PORTLAND (AP) — Police say a cougar attacked a small dog in southeast Portland.

According to the Portland Police Bureau, a woman reported that the dog was in her yard when the cougar attacked early Thursday. The dog suffered two puncture wounds, but survived

and is expected to make a full recovery.

The cougar was last seen in the street near Powell Boulevard.

Police say the yard also had pet rabbits, and that might have been a draw for the cougar.

A cougar was spotted in the same area earlier this week.

Deputies shoot suspect at Oregon marijuana facility

COTTAGE GROVE (AP) — Deputies shot and killed a man after responding to a dispute involving gunfire at a commercial marijuana facility in Cottage Grove.

Sgt. Carrie Carver of the Lane County Sheriff's Office said Thursday that deputies initially couldn't find the suspect on the large parcel of land. They eventually discovered a building where they believed the man was hiding, and used a loud speaker to call inside.

She said the man left the building at 3:45 a.m. and "engaged deputies with a firearm." Two deputies fired rounds, striking the suspect who was then taken to a hospital where he died.

Carver identified the man as 40-year-old Joey K. Loop. No deputies were hurt.

Investigators are looking into whether the use of force was legally justified. The deputies will remain on paid administrative leave during the investigation.

Corvallis man indicted in 2017 death of Russian woman

CORVALLIS (AP) — An Oregon man jailed since April 2017 in connection with the slaying of a Russian woman has been indicted on charges of murder, identity theft and theft.

The Gazette-Times reports William Hargrove, 28, of Corvallis appeared Wednesday in Benton

County Circuit Court. Hargrove's lawyer, Mike Flinn, entered not guilty pleas on his client's behalf in the death of 27-year-old Anna Repkina.

Prosecutors believe Repkina was in a love-triangle relationship with Hargrove and another woman, which led to that woman giving Hargrove an ultimatum to choose one of them.

Repkina's body was found on a remote logging road near Alsea, southwest of Corvallis. She was shot in the back of the head.

Hargrove was charged with murder on April 20, 2017, three days after Repkina's body was discovered.

This week's indictment includes charges of identity theft, for using the personal identification of Repkina, and theft — for stealing about \$800. Senior Deputy District Attorney Ryan Joslin declined to elaborate on what was taken.

Hargrove's trial is set to begin April 1, 2019.

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